

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE? WHY DID GOD (ALLAH IN ARABIC) CREATE MAN?

This Question pops up now and then among us. Many ask, what is man heading towards?

Is life nothing but a circle of birth, growth, earning, marriage, having children, growing old, and death?

What is the purpose of life?

Why do we have to undergo so much suffering to get to Heaven, where we are promised eternal bliss?

-We know through the Quran that man and Jinn were created to worship Allah. ^{51: 56}

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

- And we also know that the angels *cannot* disobey Allah's command. They are like robots who do what Allah commands, unquestioningly. On the other hand, mankind and Jinn are given limited free will to choose their destiny.

- However, while Allah gave the Jinn only limited knowledge, HE aimed to create a special species that would live on Earth, and manage its affairs beautifully.

- As a result, Allah honoured man and favoured him over all HIS Creations by the intellect and knowledge HE bestowed on him, which helps him to manage his affairs and maintain good relations with all others. HE wanted HIS attributes to be manifested on Earth, to make peace and Justice prevail.

- It is this intellect and knowledge that make man stand apart from HIS other creations. And it is this attribute given to Man that made the angels bow in honour to Adam, when Allah ordered them to do so.

- However, Iblis, who was a Jinn, disobeyed Allah and antagonised HIM through his evil traits of jealousy, vengeance, hatred, etc.

- Allah cursed him and threw him as an outcast. Shaitan, instead of repenting, justified his action and challenged that he had the power to mislead Man from the straight path.

- Allah accepted this challenge and said: "Whoever obeys you will be thrown into Hell along with you. And whoever obeys and adheres to MY Command will get the reward of returning to Heaven."

- While all the other species of life on Earth just obey Allah unquestioningly, *HE has given man the choice to obey or disobey HIM. This is the test HE placed for Man, through Shaitan, so that HE can choose the best gems for HIS Paradise from among us. If we obey HIM, we can attain Jannah (Paradise), and if we disobey HIM, we will be punished in Hell.*

"[HE is the ONE] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and HE is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving." ^{67: 2}

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَفُورُ

a. WHY DID ALLAH COMMAND THE ANGELS AND JINN TO PROSTRATE TO ADAM?

How can a man raise himself above the standard to demand such respect from the angels to have them prostrate before him? What traits does man have that can take him back to Heaven, the abode of Bliss?

The answers to all these Questions are found in the Quran and the Sunnah (Life of the Prophet ﷺ).

Before man, Allah had created the angels to do HIS bidding unquestioningly, like a slave does to his master, and then HE created the Jinn with limited free will.

After creating the universe and all the beautiful creations on Earth, Allah wished to create a species that would be the best of HIS creations. HE created Man in the best of forms, and taught him all the things of this world. It is this knowledge and intellect which Allah bestowed upon us that gives us the privilege of reaching a status higher than the angels.

The Angels and Jinn realised that Man was indeed of greater rank than themselves, because of his knowledge, which he had imbibed with Allah's Help. That is why when Allah commanded them to prostrate to Adam, they immediately complied. All obeyed except Iblis, one of the Jinn, who grew Jealous and considered himself above all other creations of Allah. Although Allah knew that Iblis would not obey HIM, and cursed him to be Shaitan (the rejected), HE allowed him to try to mislead man away from the main aim of life. HE declared: "Do what you can with your cavalry and power, but those who:

WORSHIP NONE OTHER THAN ALLAH, AND DO GOOD DEEDS TO ATTAIN THE PLEASURE OF ALLAH.¹

They will never be affected by your temptations." 17: 64

o HE declares: "**WE have certainly created man in the best of stature**; Then WE return him **to the lowest of the low**, except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted." 95: 4-6

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ - ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ -

This verse explains how man, who is created in the best of Creations, turns to the lowest of the low by turning away from Allah's worship. He let himself into ignorance and worldly attractions and became the lowest of the low. Instead, if he chooses the way ordained by Allah, educates himself spiritually and academically, and does good deeds to earn HIS pleasure, it would enable him to return to the paradise that Adam عليه وسلام had lost, due to his greed, curiosity, and succumbing to Satan's temptation.

¹ <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/87534/why-do-we-worship-allah>

b. WHY WAS ADAM AND HAWWA - EVE SENT DOWN TO EARTH?

Adam and Hawwa failed in their first test and succumbed to the temptation of Satan. *In their curiosity and greed for a long life*, they ate of the forbidden fruit in Jannah. This resulted in their *no longer being pure enough to remain there, because their body was exposed, and all the human traits of hunger, sex, excretion, etc., became manifest*. Therefore, they could no longer remain in Paradise, where only the pure can enter. And that is where our return and end are supposed to be.

c. WHAT DOES SCIENCE SAY ABOUT THE WORLDLY BENEFIT THAT WE GET BY WORSHIPPING ALLAH ALONE?

When we ponder this concept of seeking help from only HIM and surrendering to HIS will, ***we find that there is a psychological benefit in this***. Man is born weak and requires the help of some power to guide him through the straight path. For example:

- When he is born, he requires the help of his parents or guardian to mould him towards the path shown by Allah, and help him realise HIS greatness.
- After he has grown into adulthood, without the help of Allah, he finds himself lost against the temptations of Satan.
- When he is tempted by sexual arousal, he finds it difficult to suppress his feelings, which leads to harassment or illegal sex, rape, and all other illegal activities, resulting in innumerable venereal diseases like STDs and the like.
- The guilt, caused when a man sins, causes his life to be restless and ends in depression, remorse, and sorrow, resulting in many ailments.
- It is the nature of man to want to reciprocate when he is opposed and attacked verbally by his opponent. This burst of anger can lead even to murder.
- On the other hand, at this juncture, when he turns to Allah for help and calls out seeking refuge with HIM from the accursed Satan, he will find that his heart finds peace and tranquillity.
- *Doctors warn that when a man suppresses too much anger or grief (or sexual urge), he is prone to a heart attack or stroke that can lead to paralysis and other ailments. However, if he diverts his feelings towards meditation and slight exercises every 3 to 4 hours, he can stay calm and poised throughout the day. Through this method, he remains free from stress and frustration and is saved from all the accompanying diseases.*
- Allah commands us to call upon HIM Alone for help in such situations.

What better way to save ourselves than turning to Allah in Salaat (Prayers) and Athkaar?

"Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the Athkaar (remembrance) of Allah.

Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah, hearts are assured." ^{13: 28}

"One who calls upon Allah sincerely need not worry nor grieve." ^{2: 38}

THUS, WHEN WE CALL UPON ALLAH, WE FIND DUAL BENEFIT. THE ENMITY TOWARDS OUR COUNTERPART IS SUBDUED. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE CALM FEELING THAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE WILL SAVE US FROM GRAVE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES.

d. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

In English, worship means honour; something which we have great love and respect towards.

Worship means veneration and obedience to the ONE whom we love the most.

All scriptures, including the Torah, Injeel, etc., brought this same concept:

Surrendering to the will of God and doing deeds pleasing to HIM.

Will we not be ready to fulfil the command of one whom we love the most?

In Islam, worship goes beyond this. We glorify Allah after we ponder over the grandeur and beauty of HIS creation. In Islam, worship means Ibadah: Submitting to the will of Allah in all our deeds.

Is it not our duty to be thankful to Allah for having given us the wonderful worldly life with the responsibility to preserve its pristine greenery and beauty?

Is it right to misuse our strength to bring destruction and loss to ourselves and the world?

Would you like it if you gave a person even a garment as a gift, and he tears it and throws it away, while you are watching? Then how can you ignore Allah's guidance to preserve all that HE created and for your wellbeing? Then how can you ignore the right path Allah has shown for man to live in peace in this world as a condition to attain the Heaven promised for you? How can you remain complacent and ignore the warnings sent by Allah through HIS prophet ﷺ for your betterment?

THEREFORE, THE PURPOSE OF OUR LIFE IN THIS WORLD LIES IN FULFILLING THE WILL OF ALLAH: TO WORSHIP ALLAH ALONE AND DOING GOOD DEEDS PLEASING TO HIM: WORSHIPING HIM EVERY MOMENT OF OUR LIFE, AND SEEKING HIS FORGIVENESS WHENEVER WE FALTER IN OUR STEPS. THROUGH OUR LIFE CIRCLE OF BIRTH, GROWTH, EARNING, MARRIAGE, HAVING CHILDREN, GROWING OLD, AND DEATH, WE HAVE TO STRIVE TO GET BACK TO THE PLACE WHERE WE WERE CREATED.

TO REGAIN THE PLEASURE OF ALLAH, MAN IS DUTY-BOUND TO STRIVE AGAINST THE TEMPTATIONS OF SHAITAN AND RISE ABOVE THE ANGELS AND JINN.

ATTAINING MAXIMUM KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EDUCATION, BOTH ACADEMIC AS WELL AS SPIRITUAL, WILL HELP US REALIZE THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF OUR CREATOR, AND BOW TO HIM IN SINCERITY AND AWE, OBEYING HIS COMMANDMENTS WITHOUT QUESTIONING HIS RULE OF LAW.

MAY ALLAH GUIDE US ALL TOWARDS LIVING A LIFE PLEASING TO HIM. AMEEN.

BY

DR. THAHIRA IQBAL DHMS/BAIS/MAIS